



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES



Picture courtesy of the Missouri Department of Conservation

2012 MISSOURI FISH ADVISORY A Guide to Eating Missouri Fish

Visit the DHSS Fish Advisory website for additional information, educational materials and kid activities.

www.health.mo.gov/living/environment/fishadvisory/index.php



WHAT'S NEW IN THE 2012 FISH ADVISORY



This advisory clarifies the term “sunfish” as used in the Big River, Flat River, and Big Creek advisories. Nineteen different sunfish species live in Missouri. Yet this and previous Big River, Flat River and Big Creek advisories, refer to only five sunfish species: longear sunfish, green sunfish, bluegill, warmouth, and rock bass.



THE GUIDE

This guide informs individuals of the benefits of eating fish, and which fish to eat in limited quantities or not to eat due to environmental contaminants. Fish is a good source of high-quality protein, “heart healthy” fatty acids, and essential nutrients that contribute to a healthy diet if eaten regularly. Fish is low in cholesterol. Some types of fish have omega-3 fatty acids that are essential in the development of the central nervous system and may be beneficial in reducing heart disease.

Fish is a good source of high-quality protein, heart healthy fatty acids, and essential nutrients that contribute to a healthy diet.

Annually, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) evaluates fish-contaminant levels to make sure fish are safe to eat. All fish contain a small amount of chemical contaminants. In most instances and for most people, the health benefits of eating fish outweigh the potential risks from contaminants. However, there are occasions when limited or no consumption of certain fish is appropriate.

To evaluate potential health risks from fish contaminants, DHSS works with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and other government agencies. DHSS bases the advisory on extensive, annual fish-tissue studies by MDC and DNR at various Missouri lakes, ponds, rivers and streams. DHSS uses the most recent science to develop reasonable, conservative consumption guidelines for Missouri.

This guide is not intended to discourage you from eating fish; rather, it should help you make informed decisions about eating fish from Missouri’s numerous water bodies.

TABLE OF MISSOURI 2012 FISH ADVISORIES

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) recommends that all consumers be aware of the positive benefits of eating fish and the potential adverse health effects of contaminants that may be found in fish.

Missouri 2012 Fish Advisories					
Advisory Population	Location	Species¹	Length (>) greater than	Serving Advice no more than	Contaminant
Sensitive Populations: Pregnant women, women of childbearing age, nursing mothers, and children younger than age 13.	All United States water bodies	All fish	All sizes	1/week	Mercury
	Because all fish have various levels of mercury ² , the EPA recommends that sensitive populations consume no more than one (1) fish meal per week, in the absence of a local advisory.				
	All Missouri water bodies	Largemouth Bass, Spotted Bass, Smallmouth Bass, and Walleye	> 12"	1/month	Mercury
All Consumers	Clearwater Lake in Reynolds County	White Bass	> 15"	1/month	Mercury
	Mississippi & Missouri Rivers	Shovelnose Sturgeon (excluding eggs)	All sizes	1/month	PCBs, Chlordane, Mercury
		Sturgeon eggs		Do not eat	
		Flathead, Channel, Blue Catfish	> 17"	1/week	
		Common Carp	> 21"	1/week	
	Blue River from Minor Park to the Missouri River in Jackson County including Indian Creek up to Holmes Rd.	Common Carp and Channel Catfish	All sizes	1/month	PCBs, Chlordane
	Turkey Creek near Highway "P" in Jasper County	Buffalo species	> 21"	1/week	PCBs, Chlordane
	Simpson Park Lake at Simpson Park in St. Louis County	Buffalo species	> 16"	1/month	Chlordane, Mercury, PCBs
	Big River in St. Francois and Jefferson Counties	Sunfish ³ , Carp, Redhorse Suckers, and other types of suckers	All sizes	Do not eat	Lead
	Flat River in St. Francois County from Highway "B," six miles downstream to where it enters the Big River	Sunfish ³ , Carp, Redhorse Suckers, and other types of suckers	All sizes	Do not eat	Lead
	Big Creek near the town of Glover in Iron County	Sunfish ³ species	All sizes	Do not eat	Lead

1 - To help identify fish species, see the Missouri Department of Conservation's website at:

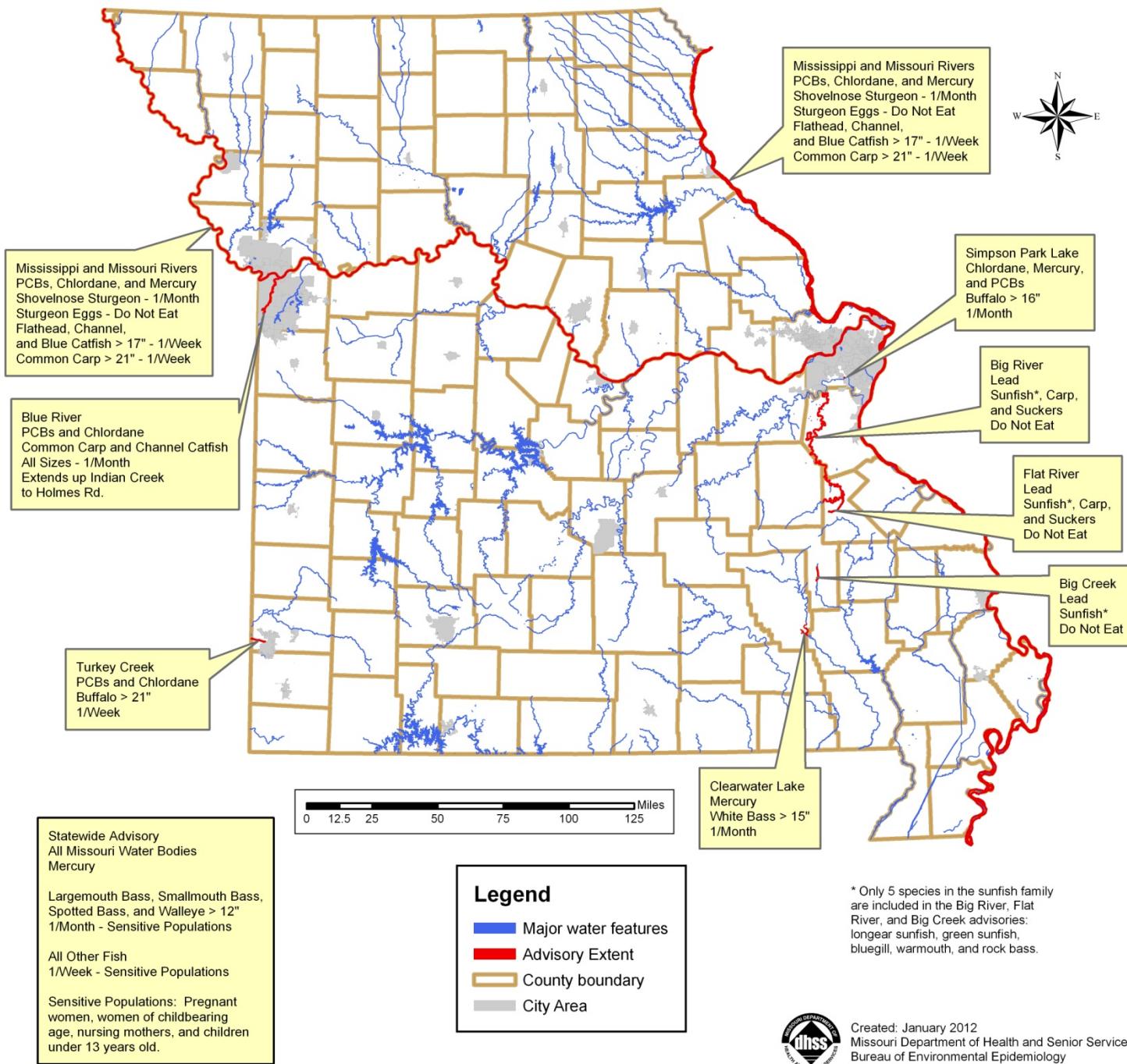
mdc4.mdc.mo.gov/applications/MDCLibrary/MDCLibrary2.aspx?NodeID=126.

2 - As stated in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) *National Fish Advisory for Mercury*, in the absence of a local advisory, individuals in the sensitive populations should consume fish at rate of no more than one (1) fish meal per week. For more information go to:
www.epa.gov/waterscience/fishadvice/1-meal-per-week.pdf

3 - Only five sunfish species are included in the Big River, Flat River and Big Creek advisories: longear sunfish, green sunfish, bluegill, warmouth, and rock bass.



Map of Missouri 2012 Fish Advisories





HEALTH BENEFITS OF EATING FISH

Recent medical research indicates that both the young and old can have significant health benefits from eating fish. A well-balanced diet that includes a variety of fish and shellfish can contribute to heart health and children's proper growth and development. The American Heart Association recommends that individuals include fish in their diets due to evidence of a link between eating fish and a lowered risk of coronary heart disease death.

Fish is an important part of a healthy diet.

- Fish contain high-quality protein and other nutrients our bodies require.
- Fish is low in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Fatty fish, such as salmon, herring and, to a lesser extent, tuna and trout, have high levels of omega-3 fatty acids which may:
 - lower cholesterol when substituted for saturated fatty acids such as those in meat;
 - improve learning ability in children;
 - decrease triglycerides;
 - lower blood pressure;
 - reduce blood clotting; and,
 - enhance immune function.

Healthier fish recipes can be found at: www.heart.org/HEARTORG, select Getting Healthy, Nutrition Center, Recipes.

The American Heart
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that individuals include fish
in their diets.

HOW DO THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN THE 2012 FISH ADVISORY COMPARE TO THOSE MADE BY THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION AND OTHERS?

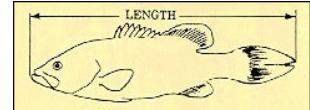
The American Heart Association recommends “eating fish, particularly fatty fish, at least two times (two servings) a week.” That recommendation may seem different than the one fish meal per week recommendation in this advisory. However, the two recommendations are comparable. For instance, eating at least two, 3.5-ounce **servings** of baked or grilled fish each week is roughly equivalent to eating one, 8-ounce fish meal per week. .



TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

SENSITIVE POPULATIONS: Because growth and development occur rapidly in young children, some chemicals may affect them differently than adults. Due to the potential risk mercury poses to the developing nervous system of fetuses and young children, special consideration is given to pregnant women, women of childbearing age, nursing mothers, and children younger than 13. These groups will be referred to as sensitive populations throughout this advisory.

FISH LENGTH: Fish are measured from the snout to the tip of the tail, as shown in the drawing.



MEAL SIZE: This advisory defines a **meal** as 8 ounces of uncooked fish for a 150-pound person and 3 ounces for a 40-pound child.

FISH PREPARATION: The chemical levels in some fish can be reduced by filleting the fish and carefully trimming away the fat when the fish is cleaned (*See trimming and cooking guide in Appendix A*). Some chemicals, like lead, concentrate in bones, while other chemicals, such as chlordane and PCBs, concentrate in fatty tissue. When fish is prepared by filleting and trimming away the fat, contaminants are minimized. **The meal advice in this advisory is based on these preparation techniques. Individuals may be exposed to higher chemical levels if they fail to follow these techniques.** Filleting will not reduce the levels of some chemicals, such as mercury.

As a rule-of-thumb:
Eat the smaller, legal-size fish
and release the lunkers so they
can fight another day.

GENERAL INFORMATION

General Rules to Follow

Keep eating fish. Smaller or younger fish tend to have lower levels of contaminants than older fish of the same species because younger fish consume smaller prey and have not lived as long to accumulate as many contaminants. Eat the smaller, legal-size fish and release the lunkers so they can fight another day. Fish in Missouri that typically have very low levels of mercury are trout, crappie (except those from Clearwater Lake), sunfish (except green sunfish), and suckers.

Posted Signs

If a fishing location has warning signs posted, follow them. This advisory does not include local warnings. **Specific warnings are special cases and should be followed.**



FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORY CATEGORIES

Missouri has three types of fish consumption advisories:

- **Unrestricted consumption**
- **Limited consumption**
 - Consume no more than **one (1) meal a week** (52 meals a year)
 - Consume no more than **one (1) meal a month** (12 meals a year)
- **No consumption** of fish (Do not eat)

FISH ADVISORY 2012

Individuals are advised to eat no more than the recommended meal amount. (NOTE: For this advisory, one fish meal is 8 ounces of uncooked fish for a 150-pound adult and 3 ounces for a 40-pound child.)

Advisory Group: Sensitive Populations

Key Contaminant: Mercury

Because of the potential risk mercury poses to the developing nervous system of fetuses and young children, DHSS continues to advise high-risk, sensitive populations, to limit fish consumption. The statewide mercury advisory for all water bodies in Missouri is as follows:

Sensitive populations are advised to eat no more than:

- **One meal per month:** walleye, largemouth bass, spotted bass, and smallmouth bass greater than 12 inches in length.
- **One meal per week:** all other sport fish, because all fish have various levels of mercury. In the absence of local advisories, consumers are advised to restrict fish consumption of locally caught fish to one meal per week. For more information go to: www.epa.gov/waterscience/fishadvice/1-meal-per-week.pdf.

For **sensitive populations**, the following specific water bodies have limited-consumption advisories due to mercury:

- Clearwater Lake (Reynolds County)--
 - **One meal per month:** white bass greater than 15 inches in length

Advisory Group: All Consumers

Key Contaminants: PCBs and Chlordane

While statewide fish-tissue contaminant concentrations have declined, PCBs and chlordane are a concern at certain water bodies. DHSS recommends that all consumers limit consumption of specified fish at the following locations for the reasons stated:

- Missouri and Mississippi rivers--



- **One meal per month:** shovelnose sturgeon fish tissue (excluding eggs) due to PCBs and chlordane
 - **Do not eat:** sturgeon eggs due to PCBs and chlordane
 - **One meal per week:** flathead, channel, and blue catfish greater than 17 inches due to PCBs, chlordane, and mercury
 - **One meal per week:** common carp greater than 21 inches due to PCBs, chlordane, and mercury
- Blue River (from Minor Park to the Missouri River in Jackson County extending up Indian Creek to Holmes Road)--
- **One meal per month:** common carp and channel catfish for all sizes due to chlordane and PCBs
- Turkey Creek (near Highway “P” in Jasper County)--
- **One meal per week:** buffalo species greater than 21 inches due to PCBs and chlordane
- Simpson Park Lake (St. Louis County)--
- **One meal per month:** buffalo species greater than 16 inches due to chlordane, mercury, and PCBs

Advisory Group: All Consumers

Key Contaminant: Lead

DHSS recommends that all consumers limit consumption of specified fish at the following locations for the reasons stated:

- Big River (St. Francois and Jefferson Counties) and Flat River (St Francois County from Highway B to six miles downstream where it enters Big River)--
- **Do not eat:** carp, sunfish, redhorse, or other suckers due to lead.
 - only five sunfish species are included in this advisory: longear sunfish, green sunfish, bluegill, warmouth, and rock bass
- Big Creek (Iron County near the town of Glover extending from the town of Hogan to the town of Chloride)--
- **Do not eat:** sunfish due to lead.
 - only five sunfish species are included in this advisory: longear sunfish, green sunfish, bluegill, warmouth, and rock bass

WHICH MISSOURI FISH TEND TO HAVE LOW CONTAMINANT LEVELS?

Fish in Missouri that typically have very low mercury, PCB and chlordane levels are trout, crappie (except those from Clearwater Lake), sunfish (except green sunfish), and suckers. In addition, smaller or younger fish tend to have lower contaminant concentrations than older fish of the same species because younger fish consume smaller prey and have not lived as long to accumulate as many contaminants.



ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

DHSS encourages using fishing weights and lures made of non-lead materials. DHSS also discourages canning, pickling, and grinding certain fish from certain areas. Details on these recommendations can be found in Appendixes D and E.



COMMERCIALLY PURCHASED FISH

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Advice for Sensitive Populations

The following EPA and FDA recommendations are for women and young children.

1. Do not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, or tilefish.
2. Eat up to 12 ounces a week of a variety of fish and shellfish low in mercury.
 - o Five commonly eaten commercial fish low in mercury are shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock and catfish.
 - o Another commonly eaten fish, albacore ("white") tuna, has more mercury than canned light tuna. So, when choosing your two meals of fish and shellfish, you may eat up to 6 ounces of albacore tuna per week.

water.epa.gov/scitech/swguidance/fishshellfish/outreach/advice_index.cfm

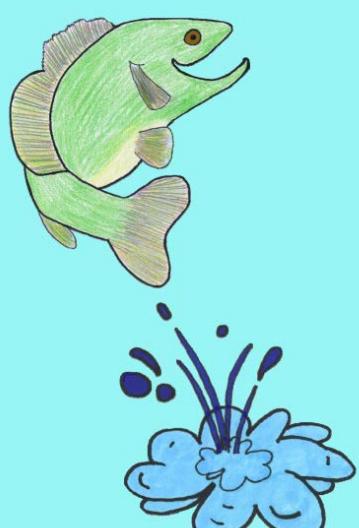
DHSS recommends that all consumers be aware of the positive benefits of eating fish, as well as the potential health risks from contaminants.



WEB RESOURCES

- Visit our website at www.health.mo.gov/living/environment/fishadvisory/index.php for more information on fish advisories, or call us at 573-751-6102 or (toll-free) 866-628-9891.
- To help you identify fish species, see the Missouri Department of Conservation's website at: mdc4.mdc.mo.gov/applications/MDCLibrary/MDCLibrary2.aspx?NodeID=126
- Missouri Department of Natural Resources Water Protection Program: www.dnr.mo.gov/env/wpp/index.html
- Missouri Stream Team: www.mostreamteam.org/
- The Florida Department of Health has developed a pocket card that contains commercial fish advisories: www.doh.state.fl.us/floridafishadvice/PrintableWalletCard.pdf
- Healthier fish recipes can be found at: www.heart.org/HEARTORG, select Getting Healthy, Nutrition Center, Recipes.
- Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Nutrition Program: www.health.mo.gov/living/wellness/nutrition/

Fish Advisory Activity Book



WARNING!!!



Do NOT
eat raw
crayfish

Crayfish (“crawdads”) contain parasites that can cause severe lungworm disease in people and animals.

Cooked crayfish are safe to eat.

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DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES
www.dhss.mo.gov

 MISSOURI
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES
dnr.mo.gov



APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Trimming and Cooking
Your Fish to Reduce Fat and Chemical Contaminants

Appendix B: Contaminants of Concern

Appendix C: Future Chemical Considerations

Appendix D: Special Advisory – Lead Sinkers

Appendix E: Special Advisory - Canning, Pickling, and Grinding



Appendix A

Trimming and Cooking Your Fish to Reduce Fat and Chemical Contaminants



TRIMMING AND COOKING YOUR FISH TO REDUCE FAT AND CHEMICAL CONTAMINANTS



Fillet your fish. Filleting is strongly recommended because removing bones, fatty tissues, and all internal organs will greatly reduce the levels of most contaminants in fish.



Trim away fatty portions of the fish such as the dorsal, lateral and belly area. (See diagram below.)



Remove the skin from fish.



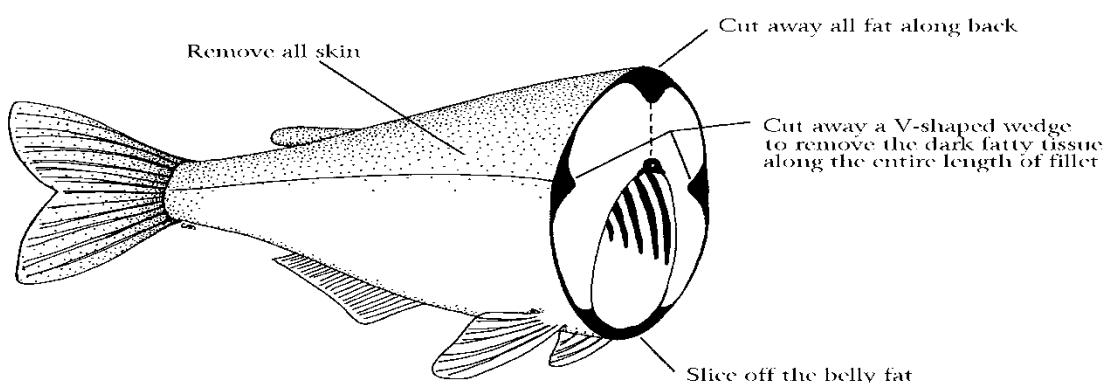
Do not eat fish eggs. They are very high in fat and may contain contaminants that are associated with fatty tissue.



Bake, grill, or broil fish on a rack and let the fat drip away. Do not use the juices. Avoid pan-frying in butter or animal fat, or making soups or chowders. These methods retain fat-laden juices. If you deep-fry fish, do not reuse the oil. Some contaminants will become concentrated in reused oil.



Since metals do not tend to concentrate in fatty tissue, filleting, trimming fat, or special cooking methods will not reduce the mercury levels.





Appendix B

Contaminants of Concern



CONTAMINANTS OF CONCERN

Many adverse health effects of chemicals are discussed below; however, this does not mean that eating fish will cause these health effects. In most cases, the benefits of eating fish outweigh the risks.

Mercury/Methylmercury

Methylmercury's potential to bioaccumulate in fish makes it the form of mercury that poses the greatest risk to humans through fish consumption. Mercury occurs naturally in the environment and can enter the environment from natural sources through the breakdown of rocks and soil and from volcanic activity. Human activities such as mining and burning of fossil fuels may account for one-third to two-thirds of the mercury released in the environment.

Nearly all fish contain trace amounts of mercury. However, this does not mean that eating fish will cause adverse health effects from mercury. In fact, for most individuals, amount of mercury taken into the body from eating most fish is not a health concern. Smaller and/or younger fish tend to have lower levels of mercury in their bodies because they consume smaller prey and have not lived as long to have time to accumulate as much mercury in their bodies.

Methylmercury is extremely toxic to humans. Ingesting methylmercury can impair neurological development. Unborn and young children, who are in the early stages of neurological development, are at the greater risk of adverse health effects. Expectant and nursing mothers can also pass methylmercury to their children. Exposure to elevated methylmercury concentrations may result in developmental delays and IQ deficits in children.

For more information, see: [Mercury Update: Impact on Fish Advisories](#), and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's (ATSDR) [ToxFAQs for Mercury](#).

Chlordane and Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)

Chlordane's and polychlorinated biphenyls' (PCBs) potential to bioaccumulate in fish makes fish consumption a risk in certain water bodies in Missouri. PCB manufacturing stopped in 1977, and chlordane was banned in 1988. However, because PCBs and chlordane don't breakdown easily in the environment and were widely used, they can still be found throughout the United States.

While in decline in Missouri, chlordane and PCBs continue to persist in the environment. The meal advice presented in the summary table is for all fish consumers.

Chlordane typically affects the nervous system, the digestive system and the liver. Exposure to it may cause headaches, irritation, confusion, weakness, vision problems, upset stomach, vomiting, stomach cramps, diarrhea, and jaundice. Chlordane accumulates in fatty tissue. Since breast milk is high in fat, women with levels of chlordane in their system may pass chlordane to their children through breast milk.

For more information, see: the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's ([ATSDR ToxFAQs for Chlordane](#)).



Health Effects of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)

PCBs may cause chloracne, other skin changes and decreased birth weights. PCBs may also affect the immune system and nervous system. PCBs may cause mild neurodevelopment delays in some children.

PCBs accumulate in fatty tissue. Since breast milk is high in fat, women with PCB in their system may pass it to their children through breast milk.

For more information, see: [Polychlorinated Biphenyls \(PCBs\) Update: Impact on Fish Advisories](#), and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's (ATSDR) [ToxFAQs for PCBs](#).

Lead

Lead's potential to bioaccumulate in fish makes fish consumption a risk in certain regions of Missouri, especially in mining areas. The meal advice in this advisory only considers an individual's exposure to lead from eating fish. It does not consider other possible sources of lead, listed below.

Lead is a naturally occurring metal found in the earth's crust. For most of its history, Missouri has been the top lead producer in the country. Deposits of lead ore have been discovered and mined in many of Missouri's counties south of the Missouri River. In counties like Jasper, Madison, Jefferson, St. Francois, Washington and Iron, where lead mining occurred, yard soil and private drinking water may contain much higher lead levels than in other parts of Missouri.

Lead has no nutritional benefits for humans. Children are more susceptible to lead poisoning than adults. Lead has the greatest effect on the nervous system in adults and especially in children. Women can experience complications with their pregnancy if they are exposed to high lead levels. These complications range from low birth weight to miscarriage. Nursing mothers with lead in their blood may pass it to their children through breast milk.

Lead is most dangerous to the unborn and young children. When lead enters the body, a larger proportion of the lead is absorbed and retained by children compared to an adult. Adverse health effects of lead in children may include decreased intelligence quotient (IQ) scores, learning disabilities, slowed growth, hyperactivity, impaired hearing, and, at very high exposure levels, brain damage. In children and adults, lead can cause weakness in fingers, wrists or ankles. Unborn children can also be exposed to lead through their mothers. Lead can cause premature births, low birth weight, decreased mental ability, learning difficulties, and reduced growth in young children. **Yearly blood-lead testing before a child is 72 months old is key to determining if a child has been exposed to lead.**

For more information, see: [ATSDR's ToxFAQs for Lead](#).



Appendix C

Future Chemical Considerations



FUTURE CHEMICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Scientific advancements have led to the detection of certain chemicals in water bodies at much lower concentrations than previously possible. In addition, new and emerging technology and products may have unforeseen environmental or health issues. Those being studied to determine their environmental and human health effects include polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), endocrine disruptors, pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs), and nanoscale materials. **At present, none of these “emerging contaminants,” as they are sometimes called, has prompted a fish consumption advisory in Missouri.** DHSS will continue to monitor advancements in science pertaining to emerging contaminants. Each of these will be discussed briefly below.

Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers (PBDEs)

PBDEs are man-made, flame-retardant chemicals. They are added to a variety of consumer products, such as plastic and foam, to reduce a product’s ability to burn. Because PBDEs are so widespread in the environment, they may also be found in fish tissue. Today most people have been exposed to low levels of PBDEs in their everyday environment. However, there is little information on the health effects of PBDEs on humans.

For more information, see: [ATSDR’s ToxFAQs for Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers \(PBDEs\)](#).

Endocrine Disruptors

Endocrine disruptors are chemicals that may affect the endocrine system. These chemicals can mimic the body’s natural hormones, blocking a hormone’s effects, or directly stimulating or inhibiting the endocrine system. Evidence strongly suggests that exposure to endocrine disruptors can affect the development and reproduction of fish and wildlife in certain locations. But how low levels of these chemicals affect humans is not well understood.

For more information see: [EPA’s Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program \(EDSP\)](#).

Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products (PPCPs)

PPCPs are a very broad classification of thousands of chemical substances that include products used for personal health or cosmetic reasons or to increase the growth or health of livestock. PPCPs include prescription and over-the-counter medication, veterinary drugs, cosmetics, sunscreen and vitamins. Studies have found PPCPs in most of the U.S. water bodies that have been sampled. Research suggests that some ecological harm may occur when certain PPCPs are present; however, no health effects on humans have been identified yet.

For more information on how to dispose of prescription drugs, see: [The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Guidance for the Proper Disposal of Prescription Drugs](#).

For more information on PPCPs, see: [EPA’s Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products \(PPCPs\)](#).



Nanoscale Materials

Nanotechnology makes it possible to create microscopic materials roughly 100 to 10,000 times smaller than the thickness of human hair. These nanoscale materials may have different properties than the same chemical substances at larger sizes. For instance, a nanoscale material may be lighter, stronger, or more reactive than the original substance. Nanotechnology has the potential to provide many benefits, yet it may also pose a hazard to humans and the environment. Nanotechnology is in its early stages of development. Few detailed studies are available on how nanomaterials affect humans or the environment.

For more information on nanotechnology and nanoscale materials, see: [EPA's Fact Sheet for Nanotechnology under the Toxic Substances Control Act](#).



Appendix D

Special Advisory – Lead Sinkers



Advisory: Lead in Fishing Tackle

DHSS recognizes that lead can be harmful to individuals, especially children, when ingested or inhaled. Therefore, DHSS recommends using fishing tackle made of alternative materials such as tin, bismuth, tungsten and ceramic.

Many of us do not have to look further than our tackle boxes to find lead. Items like sinkers, weights, shots, jig heads and weighted hooks are often made of lead. Improper use and handling of these items may result in lead entering your body. Adults, and especially children, are susceptible to adverse health effects from lead. Protect yourself and your family by following these simple steps:

1. Replace the lead items in your tackle box with non-lead alternatives such as tin, bismuth, tungsten and ceramic. These alternatives are sold at most locations fishing tackle is sold.
2. If non-lead fishing tackle is not a viable option,, you can still minimize your exposure by:
 - a) Never putting lead weights in your mouth! AND
 - b) Washing your hands before eating, drinking or putting them in or near your mouth.

Following these simple steps will help protect you and your family from the dangers of lead.

Special Advisory: MELTING LEAD IS VERY DANGEROUS! Melting lead to cast sinkers should not be done at home. Lead fumes and lead dust can be released during this process and contaminate your home, garage, yard and clothes.



Appendix E

Special Advisory - Canning, Pickling, and Grinding



Advisory: Canning, Pickling, and Grinding May Increase the Amount of Lead Ingested

Lead accumulates in fish bone at much higher concentrations than in other parts of fish. Because fish bones are not typically consumed by individuals, the amount of lead in the bone is usually not taken into account while drawing recommendations for the Missouri Fish Consumption Advisory. However, suckers and carp have small, needle-like bones in their fillet that are difficult to remove. Some people may prepare and consume these fish without removing these bones. But consuming these bones may increase the health risks associated with lead.

Suckers, carp and sunfish may have high bone-lead levels if they are caught in counties where lead mining has historically occurred, like Jasper, Madison, Jefferson, St. Francois, Washington and Iron. For these fish, caught in these historic mining areas, it is recommended that individuals avoid preparation methods that make a large portion of their bones easy to consume. Such methods may include canning, pickling and grinding.